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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5527

REF: LONDON 1632

1. BRITISH LABOR MP, ALAN LEE WILLIAMS, WHO IS HERE AS UNOFFICIAL OBSERVER OF THE ELECTIONS HAS TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE IMPRESSED BY WHAT HE HAS SEEN AND QUITE CONVINCE
PTHAT THE ELECTIONS WERE ESSENTIALLY HONEST, REMARKABLY SO FOR THIS PART OF THE WORLD. WILLIAMS SAID HE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE AROUND FREELY ON ELECTION DAY, VISITED A NUMBER OF POLLING STATIONS AND FELT THAT HE SAW ENOUGH TO MAKE A REASONABLE JUDGMENT. HE WAS PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED BY THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ELECTIONS AND THE EFFICIENCY WITH

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WHICH THE WHOLE PROCESS WAS CARRIED OUT.

2. MR. WILLIAMS IS REMAINING IN VIET NAM FOR APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEKS AFTER THE ELECTIONS AND IS TOURING

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AS WIDELY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AS POSSIBLE. EMBOFF FOUND THAT MR. WILLIAMS, IS A STRONG DEFENDER OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE AND OF THE U.S. PRESENCE IN SOUTH VIET NAM. HE STATES THAT IN HIS MIND IT WOULD BE QUITE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE UNITED STATES TO WITHDRAW ITS FORCES FROM SVN, THAT SUCH A MOVE WOULD BE A DISASTROUS BLOW TO U.S. PRESTIGE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, INDEED TO THE WHOLZHSECURITY OF THE FREE WORLD.

3. HE IS LESS SANGUINE ABOUT THE BOMBING AND FEELS THAT HOWEVER NECESSARY IT MAY BE FROM A MILITARY POINT OF VIEW THAT WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT IT IS A TREMENDOUS POLITICAL LIABILITY AND SHOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MINIMIZE THE NEGATIVE POLITICAL IMPACT. FOR THIS REASON HE FAVORS A BOMBING PAUSE EVEN IF ONLY FOR A SHOR PERIOD AS A MEANS OF DEMONSTRATING TO THE WORLD

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THE SINCERITY OF U.S. INTENTIONS TO TRY EVERY POSSIBLE MEANS TO BRING THE NVN TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. HE STATES THAT HE IS QUITE CERTAIN THAT SUCH A PAUSE WILL NOT BE PRODUCTIVE OF ANY ACCEPTABLE OVERTURES BY NVN, BUT EVEN IF THE BOMBING WERE RESUMED, THE PAUSE WOULD XL INVALUABLE IN DEPRIVING THE COMMUNISTS AND OTHER ANTI-WAR ELEMENTS OF THE PROPAGANDA MILEAGE THEY ARE NOW GETTING OUT OF HANOI'S ALLEGED WILLINGNESS TO TALK IF THE BOMBING IS STOPPED. HE FEELS THIS GAIN COULD BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT ANY COMMITMENT TO UNCONDITIONAL AND DEFINITIVE CESSATION.

4. MR. WILLIAMS SPOKE OF THE VIRULENT ANTI-WAR FEELING IN ENGLAND AND AVERRED THAT HIS OWN POSITION WITHIN HIS PARTY HAS BEEN DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF HIS SUPPORT OF THA2-4. HE SAID THAT SEVERAL MONTHS AGO HE WROTE A LETTER TO THE TIMES IN WHICH HE STATED SIMPLY THAT BLOWING UP CROWDED BUSSES AND RESTAURANTS WITH PLASTIQUE BOMBS AS THE VC DO IN SVN WAS CERTAINLY JUST AS BAD AS U.S. BOMBING IN THE NORTH. AS HE POINTED

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OUT, THIS WAS A PRETTY MILD STATEMENT YET HE CLAIMS HE RECEIVED OVER SIX HUNDRED ABUSIVE LETTERS AND TELEPHONE CALLS OF SUCH A NATURE THAT HE WAS GENUINELY FRIGHTENED. HE NOTED THE SIMILARITY OF THE ABUSIVE LANGUAGE USED IN MANY OF THE LETTERS WHICH LED HIM TO BELIEVE THAT THERE WAS CLEARLY SOME ORGANIZED EFFORT INVOLVED.

5. EMBOFF MENTIONED TO WILLIAMS THAT HE HAD SEEN EXCERPTS OF HIS ARTICLE IN THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH (REFTEL) AND WONDERED IF HE REALLY FELT HIMSELF SO OVERWHELMED BY THE AMERICAN OBSERVERS. WILLIAMS SAID THAT THE AMERICANS WERE SOMEWHAT UBIQUITOUS IN THE SEPTEMBER 2 GVN PROGRAM FOR THE OBSERVERS. HIS ONLY POINT IN HIS ARTICLE, HOWEVER, WAS THAT HE WONDERED HOW THIS DIVERSE GROUP OF MEN, MOST OF WHOM HAD NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN ASIA AND WHO SEEMED BENT ON RELATING EVERYTHING TO THEIR DOMESTIC AMERICAN VALUES, COULD EFFECTIVELY ASSESS THE ELECTIONS. HE ADMITTED HIS OWN FEELINGS OF INADEQUACY AND SAID HE WAS SURE THERE WOULD

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HAVE BEEN THE SAME PROBLEMS WITH A SIMILAR BRITISH OBSERVER TEAM. HE DENIED ANY OTHER CRITICAL INTENT.

6. THERE SEEMED NO QUESTION THAT WILLAIMS HAS BEEN GREATLY IMPRESSED BY HIS EXPERIENCE HERE IN VIET NAM AND CONFIRMED IN THE APPARENTLY FAVORABLE VIEWS HE ALREADY HELD BEFORE COMING HERE. HIS SHOULD BE A HELPFUL VOICE ON HIS RETURN TO ENGLAND.

GP-3. BUNKER

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